

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 L-03 H-02 NSC-05 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3816

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS DACCA 1264

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : EINV, EAID, EIND, BG

SUBJECT : BDG COMMERCE ADVISOR TO VISIT US

1. MOHAMED SAIFUR RAHMAN, MEMBER, PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL IN CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (IN EFFECT, A CABINET MINISTER) PLANS TO VISIT NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON, D.C. FROM MARCH 24 TO 30, 1977. HIS PURPOSES INCLUDE MEETINGS WITH USG OFFICIALS, UN AND IBRD OFFICIALS, PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN AND POTENTIAL AMERICAN INVESTORS IN BANGLADESH. RAHMAN'S SECRETARY INFORMS US THAT HE HAS WRITTEN TO BDG AMBASSADORS KAISER (UN) AND SIDDIQUI CONCERNING THIS VISIT. BIO DATA CONTAINED IN 76 DACCA 6483 AND DACCA A-02.

2. ITINERARY. SAIFUR RAHMAN IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE NEW YORK AT 1335 HRS MARCH 24 ON PA FLIGHT 101 FROM LONDON; TO PROCEED TO WASHINGTON, D.C. ON MARCH 27 AND TO DEPART MARCH 30 VIA NEW YORK AT 2000 HRS ON PA FLIGHT 2 FOR LONDON. PLEASE EXTEND CUSTOMS COURTESIES APPROPRIATE TO A CABINET MINISTER.

3. INVESTMENT PROMOTION. THE AMBASSADOR TELEPHONED UNCLASSIFIED

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SAIFUR RAHMAN MARCH 2 TO SAY THAT THIS TRIP WOULD BE FAR MORE PRODUCTIVE, IN TERMS OF PROMOTING INVESTMENT, IF THE NATIONALIZATION COMPENSATION AND COOLEY LOAN CLAIMS WERE SETTLED (SEE DACCA 1171, 1184 AND PREVIOUS). SAIFUR RAHMAN REPLIED THAT HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO SEE "IT WAS DONE" BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE.

4. COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS. (A) COURTESY CALL. AT A MINIMUM, WE BELIEVE THAT THIS FIRST MINISTERIAL-LEVEL VISIT BY A BDG OFFICIAL TO THE US (AS OPPOSED TO THE UN) SINCE ADMIRAL KHAN'S BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION TRIP EIGHT MONTHS AGO, MERITS A HIGH-LEVEL COURTESY CALL. (RAHMAN IS WELL-EDUCATED, SOPHISTICATED, WITH EXCELLENT ENGLISH AND FULL APPRECIATION OF WESTERN BUSINESS AND ACCOUNTING PRACTICES.) WE WOULD RECOMMEND A CALL ON SAIFUR RAHMAN'S COUNTERPART, COMMERCE SECRETARY KREBS, AS WELL AS CALLS ON STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS AND MEETINGS WITH BUSINESS GROUPS. THERE IS, IN FACT, A GROWING INTEREST IN INVESTMENT IN BANGLADESH AND ONE US FIRM IS TO APPRAISE THE BAKHRABAD GAS FIELD AS A STEP TOWARD A POSSIBLE \$800 MILLION INVESTMENT PROJECT (DACCA 652).

(B) CLAIMS. ALL BUT ONE OF THE SEVERAL OUTSTANDING NATIONALIZATION AND LOAN CLAIMS HAS BEEN FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE BDG, BUT THAT ONE (COMPENSATION FOR US INSURANCE COMPANIES NATIONALIZED IN 1972) FALLS DIRECTLY UNDER RAHMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY AND HIS VISIT OFFERS US OFFICIALS CONCERNED AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS THIS ISSUE DIRECTLY WITH HIM IF DEFINITE ACTION HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM DACCA. MASTERS

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